

You should consider this matter with the closest scrutiny and decide whether you will send your patients to non-medical X-ray technicians, or whether you will insure for them the skilled services of a trained medical radiologist. Radiology is strictly a medical specialty. It requires qualities which can only be secured through the medium of a medical education. Consider well whether the best interests of your patients as well as of your own profession, are not served by keeping radiology as a strictly medical specialty and employing only qualified physicians as radiologists.

CARE OF CRIPPLED CHILDREN

At the present time, interest in better health for children occupies a greater position in the popular mind than ever before. The up-to-date physician views these child welfare movements with gratification. One of the pressing of these problems is the urgent need for better care, both medical and educational, of the crippled class of children. Among these children the mentally normal, but physically handicapped by some deformity either congenital or acquired, can be benefited by adequate medical care, thereby giving them a better chance to gain an independent state in later life. The responsibility rests entirely on the parents or guardian. To make a diagnosis, to urge treatment on the parents, means also the carrying on of the reclamation work in an effective manner. Who can do this but a physician, and how can he do it if the means are not at hand?

In the near future definite data concerning the number of children under eighteen years of age requiring medical consideration will be placed before us. Already a conservative estimate of those needful of immediate treatment is great. This work must be carried on. For the more severe cases a hospital school situated in a suitable community is essential, in order that while surgical measures or other necessary treatment is being accomplished, the child may receive such educational training as is possible. Simpler cases can be well taken care of in the various excellent clinics in our cities under strict observation extending into the home. This problem is of great importance to the state and to the community and requires the best co-operation from all physicians.

THE COMMITMENT OF THE INSANE

It is commonly recognized that there exist serious abuses in our present method of commitment of the insane and that the method is neither economical, scientific or humane. We might go further with the statement that the present method is grossly out of date and based on a wrong conception of the problem involved and the result to be desired. Commitment should not be a police function nor should the mentally sick be subject to police control. The argument that the diagnosis of insanity at once impugns the civic status of the individual is not sufficient reason for the wretched process now required for the commitment of the mentally ill. The civic status of an individual is seriously affected by the diagnosis of smallpox and yet the medical health authorities control and direct the situation purely as a health problem

and their police powers are secondary and subordinate to the end of securing the best treatment for the patient and the best protection for the community. Similar conditions should obtain in regard to the mentally diseased.

At present a patient with sufficient "disease insight" to recognize that his mental condition requires treatment, cannot easily secure that hospital care needed, without having a warrant sworn out for his commitment. Moreover, commitment is practically impossible unless the patient is brought for at least twenty-four hours to a detention hospital for observation. Most people who need it, refuse state care, or at least postpone it as long as possible, because they will not subject their relatives or themselves to the publicity and police methods now necessary for commitment.

In the line of remedying the present deplorable situation, certain constructive suggestions can be made which would at least pave the way for a proper recognition in practice of the fact that the mentally sick are entitled to the same scientific care and humane consideration that our other sick receive and are entitled to receive. In the first place a psychopathic hospital as a clearing house for all mental cases would afford a place where any patient could apply personally or be brought by his friends for diagnosis and treatment. Secondly, there should be available boards of full time salaried psychiatrists, whose duties, like those of our present health officers, would oblige them to make examinations at the homes or in general hospitals anywhere, and whenever the call came. In suitable cases diagnosis could thus be made without removing the patient to the detention hospital. Thirdly, the legal side of commitment should be made as inconspicuous as possible and should go only so far as to guarantee the safety and the property rights of all concerned. The entire matter should be recognized correctly as a matter of mental health and not considered as an infraction of law and therefore necessitating its approach primarily from the police and legal point of view.

HOSPITALS, ATTENTION!

Have you read Senate Bill 605? If you have and are not disturbed, read it again. It provides for the licensing, inspection and regulation of hospitals, homes, sanatoriums or other institutions that care for mentally sick or mentally defective persons.

In our opinion this is a dangerous bill that ought to be defeated. Primarily it takes out of medical control one of the highest types of special hospitals known and places the control in the hands of a lay board which has not shown, by its past performances nor by present undertaking, that it is competent to do this work. Of what value is the inspection and report of such a board upon subjects with which it is unfamiliar? It is a fact that in some states the control of the institutions for the mentally deficient and insane is supervised, but so far as known they are always supervised by competent medical boards. Anyway, California does not need to imitate bad examples that may exist elsewhere.